

Traveling with Digital Notes

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract:

Within architectural education, there is a tradition of sketching and the creation of Visual Notes, particularly when it relates to travel and exploration of the surrounding world. Within this thesis, I examine a new form of architectural notetaking: Digital Notes. Digital Notes are an extension of the traditional Visual Notes in that they incorporate modern technology such as digital cameras and photo-editing and –manipulation software to emphasize the points of interest within the original image. I look at different ways in which Digital Notes can be created and used to create this emphasis, and also reflect upon how the use of these Notes affected my travels abroad in the summer of 2018.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Tim Gray helping to guide me through this process, and for introducing me to the creation of Digital Notes while studying abroad in Europe.

I would also like to think Kevin Klinger for also leading the trip across Europe and showing me new and interesting places that became the basis for several of my Notes.

Finally, I would like to thank Ball State University and the College of Architecture and Planning and the Honors College for giving me the opportunities to study abroad as I did, and to expand upon my work from that trip in the form of this project.

Process Analysis Statement

My work on this project began in early May, 2018, as I embarked on a study abroad trip organized through Ball State's College of Architecture and Planning which took me through five European countries: Finland, Russia, Czechia, Italy, and France. The majority of the Digital Notes on display through this project were created as a requirement for one of the two courses that was a part of the trip. It was through that class and the Digital Note quota that we had to fulfill that I first learned the ideas and thought processes behind the creation of the Notes. Because of that initial task of creating the Notes for the course, I realized that I thoroughly enjoyed the process of thinking about and creating the Notes, and that I wanted to continue editing my existing Notes and creating even more as a part of my thesis project for the Honors College.

Typically, Digital Notes are created through the manipulation of photographs so as to reveal or amplify the qualities of the place that most stand out to their creator. These manipulations can be done through a variety of different programs and applications. The majority of the Digital Notes that I created during the trip were edited and manipulated using an app on my phone called Snapseed, which provides a variety of tools and ways to edit the photos in the ways that I wished. Other apps that I used on my phone include PS Express, Lightroom CC, and PicsArt, as I would occasionally come up with an idea for a note that I could not do in Snapseed, but would be possible through the use of one of those other applications. Similarly, there are a few Notes that were created once I returned from the trip that utilized Adobe Photoshop on my laptop, as I could not find any applications for my phone that could create the images in the ways that I wanted them to be done.

The first step in creating any Digital Note is to figure out what the subject of the Note is going to be. While traveling through Europe, I would look around for what stood out to me the most in my surroundings. Sometimes the most striking aspect of a scene is a building or structure that dominates the surrounding area, other times it was some detail or moment that happened to catch my eye. Once I knew what it was that I wanted to record as a Note, I would take a picture of it, and write down in my sketchbook what it was that stood out to me in the photo of the place. When I found the time to create a Note, I would look through the list of ideas written down in my sketchbook, choose one that I wanted to work on, and then find the relevant photo on my phone so that I could proceed with the editing and manipulation.

Once the photo was taken and I knew what the subject of the photo that I wanted to hone in on was, the trick became figuring out how to edit the photo so that it was clear what I was trying to analyze and show through the Note. Just because I knew what I wanted to show when I took the picture doesn't mean that I immediately knew how I was going to show it. When manipulating an image so that it becomes a Digital Note, one of the important things I had to keep in mind was that other people should be able to look at the image and figure out what it is trying to convey. I needed to learn how to edit the images to show my thoughts and ideas in a way that someone who isn't me and who wasn't traveling with me could understand them. This was especially hard for me as I was working on the first few Notes as I had never done anything like them before. I didn't know how to edit the photos properly and I didn't know how to create emphasis in the ways that I wanted to. Plus, I didn't even know what to look for in a scene in a first place that I could then make a Digital Note out of. As time progressed, though, and I created more Notes and figured out what I liked to focus upon in my photos and how to manipulate the photos to emphasize that focus, the process of creating the images became easier.

The primary technique that I discovered that worked well for me and resulted in readable images is that of using color as a tool for creating emphasis. In Snapseed, I was able to select which parts of the image I wanted to edit at a time, which allowed me to desaturate everything in the image that I felt was irrelevant to the focus I was trying to create. In many of the Notes from the trip, I would also apply layers of exposure and detail to the same parts of the image, which would cause the desaturated areas to become lighter and have with clearer boundary lines. I felt that this made them start to look like drawings, referencing back to the traditions of Visual Notes. With these methods of selective editing through Snapseed, I was able to create many of the Notes within the book.

Another tool in Snapseed I found useful was the Double Exposure function, which allowed for multiple images to be overlaid on top of one another. This was the primary tool used in the second section of the book: Emphasis via Layers. With this tool, I would take sketches I had completed over the course of the trip, and expose them over a photograph I had taken of the same scene. When used in this way, the Double Exposure function could show how different (or similar) the sketch of the place was to the reality. I also used the function to expose similar photos over each other—such as with the second Digital Note depicting St. Basil’s Cathedral in Moscow—and the same image over itself—as with the second Digital Note of the Colosseum in Rome.

The final category of Notes that I created was much less specific (Emphasis via Manipulation) because I felt that the images shown in that section did not have as much in common with any of the other sections, or even with each other. None of these images were created using Snapseed, and instead had to be generated through other means. The Hockney-style collage utilized already established techniques of photo-manipulation and was assembled in

Photoshop. The Abridged Countryside series of Notes was not edited at all, and instead was created through the manipulation of my iPhone's panoramic photo mode. By using it in a way that it wasn't intended to be used—creating a panoramic of a landscape while moving at high speeds on a train, rather than just panning around from a stationary point—the resulting images became much more unpredictable and interesting, if messy and hard to read at times.

The final set of Digital Notes were not created for the initial summer 2018 course that took me on the trip across Europe, but rather were created, in part, for this Thesis as a continuation of my work. With those images, I was inspired by the ideas of the Impressionist movement of the 19th century, and its artists such as Monet, Manet, Renoir, and others. I looked through my images from the Europe trip, as well as a subsequent trip to Iceland in March of 2019, and found images that I thought would translate well into the Impressionist style. The Impressionist movement examined ideas related to the transitory nature of light/shadow and color, and so I found images from those two trips that, I felt, exhibited those. The actual generation of the images was done through a program called Processing, which utilizes computer code such as Python scripts to create and/or edit images. I had been working with a code that created pointillized versions of photos for one of my other classes, and so I modified that code to give the end effect I was looking for in the Notes presented in this book.

Once all of the Notes were completed, I decided to compile them all into the format of a book for the purposes of this thesis. I wanted to present them in an approachable manner that would focus primarily upon the generated images, while also giving context to what some of the images were, and what they were attempting to show. The first step of this process was to figure out which Notes I was wanting to use as a part of the thesis, which ones I would like to use, but that needed to be revised/edited before being presented in the book, and which Notes I felt

should not be incorporated into the project at all. The original assignment from the 2018 course that introduced the Digital Notes to me had called for the creation of 30 Notes. Of those original Notes, I left 15 unedited and re-did another 4. The rest of the original Notes were either left out of this project, or incorporated into the Notes that I re-did. In addition to the original Notes, there were 5 new Notes created with the Impressionism theme.

The next step in compiling the final book was to organize them into the previously mentioned sections: Emphasis via Color, Emphasis via Layers, and Emphasis via Manipulation. I wanted to organize them in this way because the core of the book is about the thought processes behind the Notes, and how the original photos were edited to generate emphasis and analysis. Combining the Notes with others that were similar allowed for more direct connections between the Notes and the ideas that led to their creation. It also allowed for there to be several pages of just the Notes in some instances, with page following the images that described what the images were representing.

The final step in the process was the writing of the ending reflections in the book. My thesis advisor, Tim Gray—who also led the trip to Europe and introduced me to the Digital Notes in the first place—asked that I make sure to incorporate my own personal thoughts and views of the notes into the project as well. He was interested in knowing how I felt the Notes had influenced me over the course of the trip, and whether or not I felt that they were helpful enough to where I would continue to utilize them in the future. I decided to include the reflections as an ending to the book because I feel that they do a good job of wrapping the book up. They explain why I assembled the book in the first place and provides additional information about the project as a whole. Additionally, I found them helpful to myself. I knew that I had enjoyed the process of creating the Notes—that is the reason I used them as the basis

for this thesis—but I hadn't taken the time to actually figure out why the Notes were so helpful to me in the first place. I didn't know why the Notes had been able to affect the trip in the ways that they did. Thinking back to the trip and remembering my travels through Europe and my creation of sketches and Visual Notes helped me to recognize the influence the Digital Notes had had upon all the other aspects of my trip. This only increased my desire to compile the Notes together in the form of this thesis.

TRAVELING WITH DIGITAL NOTES



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AN HONORS THESIS

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2019

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PREFACE:

Sketching, and the process of creating other forms of “Visual Notes,” has been an important aspect of architectural education since its inception. Traditionally, Visual Notes have been recorded within their creator’s sketchbook, and have served as a record of the places that the creator has been, and what stood out to them in each location. Their purpose is not to be picture-perfect representations of what the creator was seeing, but rather to highlight the details of the scene that the creator felt were important to them; they represent the aspects and features that stood out to them the most while they were there. In this sense, Visual Notes are much like standard notes that someone may write while studying for a class--they exist for the sake of their creator as a way of reminding them of what they have seen and studied while in that place.

To this extent, the “Digital Notes” described through this book are an extension of the more traditional Visual Notes, with the exception that they are not completed within a physical sketchbook, but rather within digital devices such as smart phones. Digital Notes are often created through the manipulation of photographs to reveal or amplify the qualities of the place. Their goal is not to replace Visual Notes (several of the Digital Notes within this book incorporate sketches I drew during my studies), but to instead focus on creating new forms of Notes that allow for different aspects of places to be examined and studied. In my opinion, Digital Notes provide an avenue for note taking that is less defined, and more abstract, which allows for the viewer of the note to interpret it as they wish. Most of the Digital Notes within this book were created while I was studying abroad in Europe during the summer of 2018. They have been sorted into 3 categories that group the images together with other Notes that were edited in similar fashions and/or with similar ideas in mind.

EMPHASIS VIA COLOR

The first method of creating Digital Notes that this book looks at is Emphasis via Color. What this means is that, in each of the images shown throughout this section, parts of the images have had their color oversaturated, desaturated, or, in some instances, completely changed. This is done because juxtaposing areas that retain their color with those that have had it removed (or otherwise changed) allows for an image that is easy to read and which clearly illustrates what the focus of the Note is intended to be. If a portion of the image is completely desaturated, then the eye of the viewer is drawn to the area(s) of the image that still has color. When used strategically, areas without color can be used to frame the view of those with color, and areas with color can be used to cast the scene displayed in the image in a new light by drawing attention to aspects of the image that may have not stood out on their own. Ideas of light, reflection, texture, and surfaces can be examined by letting the desired areas be highlighted through their color, and thoughts and ideas can be illustrated through the selective use of color that focuses on a subject within the image, and changes the rest of the image to emphasize that subject as best as possible.



TREVI FOUNTAIN, ROME, ITALY



HELSINKI CATHEDRAL, HELSINKI, FINLAND

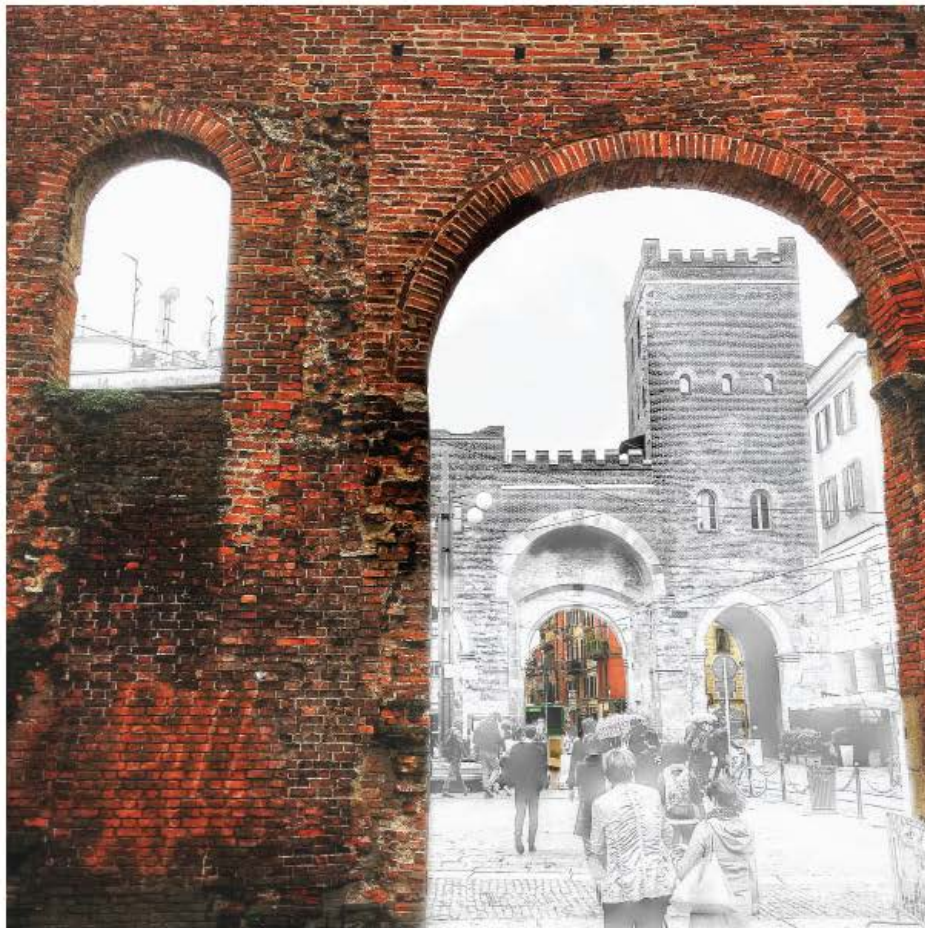


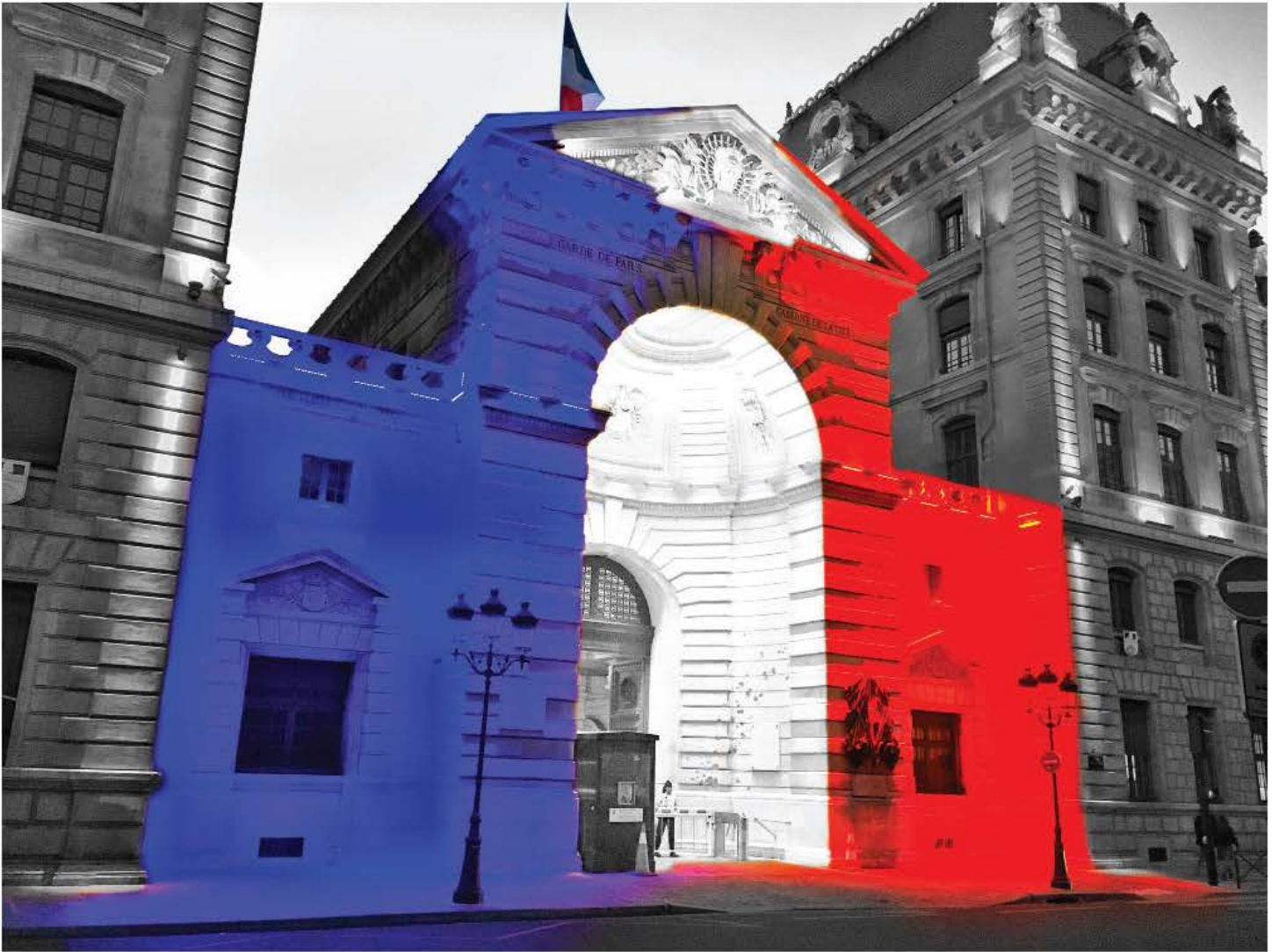
The previous image, as well as the following four, examine portals and the ways in which they can frame views while traveling through a city. Walking towards a threshold such as the arches portrayed in these images, what you can and cannot see is restricted based upon how close to the arch that you are. They separate areas that would otherwise be considered contiguous, and it becomes an idea of this side of the arch, versus the other side. The previous image looks at this by highlighting the view that is framed looking through the arch as you move towards it. The following set of images look at a pair of portals in series with each other, and focus on different ways of looking through them. Different people will see and focus on different aspects of the set of portals, so the images examine these ideas and juxtapose the portals with their surroundings.



MILAN, ITALY





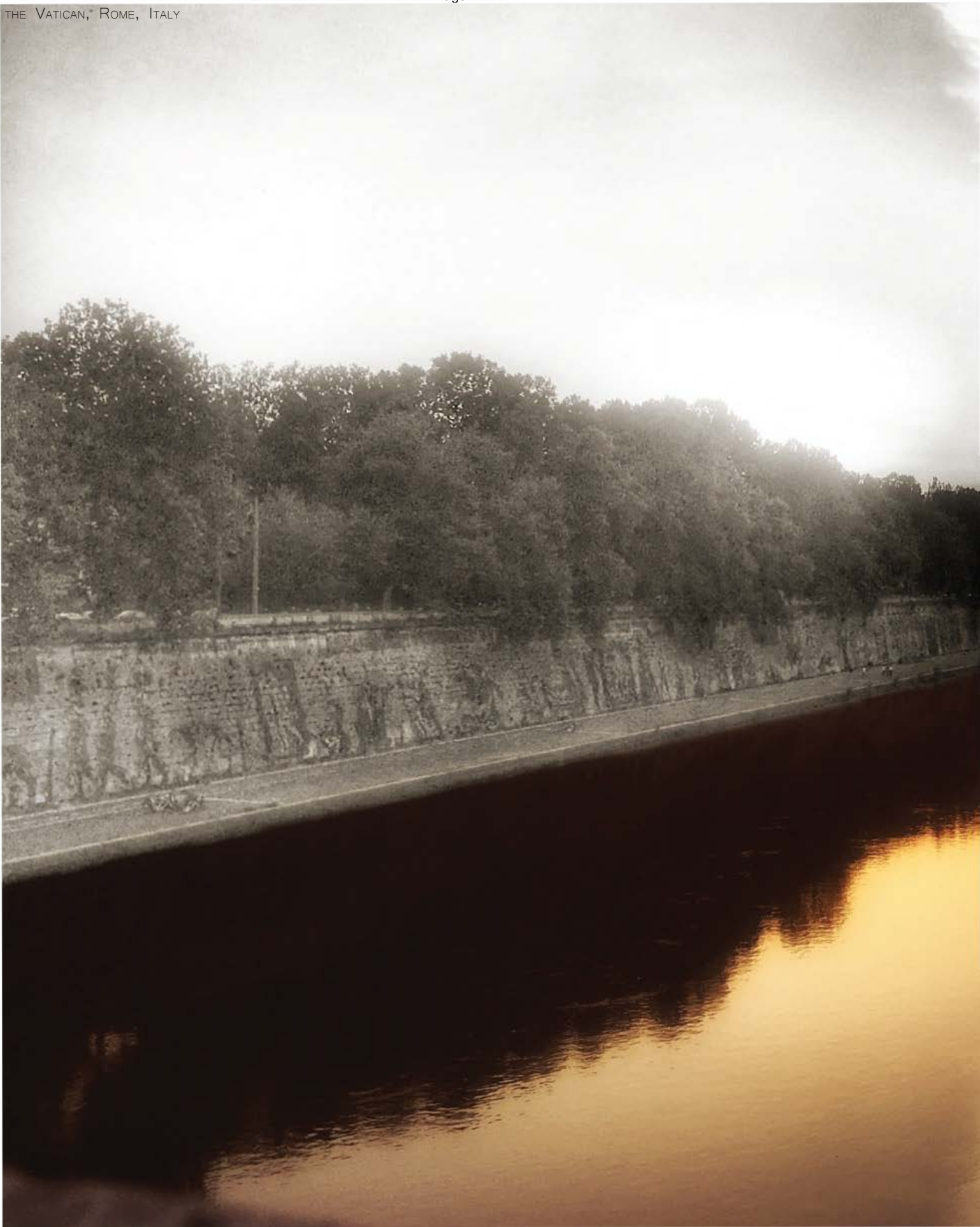


PARIS, FRANCE

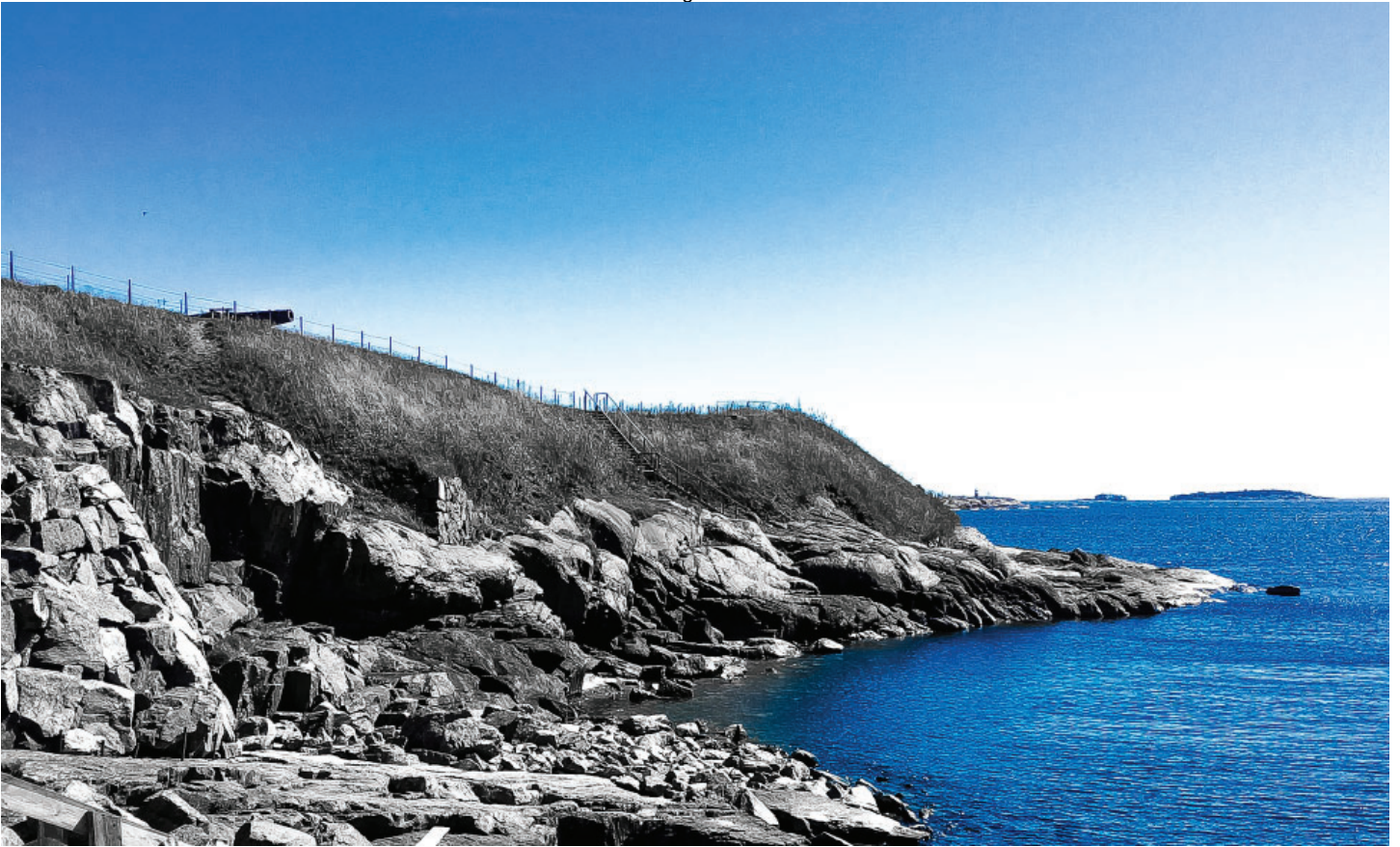


FLORENCE, ITALY

THE VATICAN, ROME, ITALY

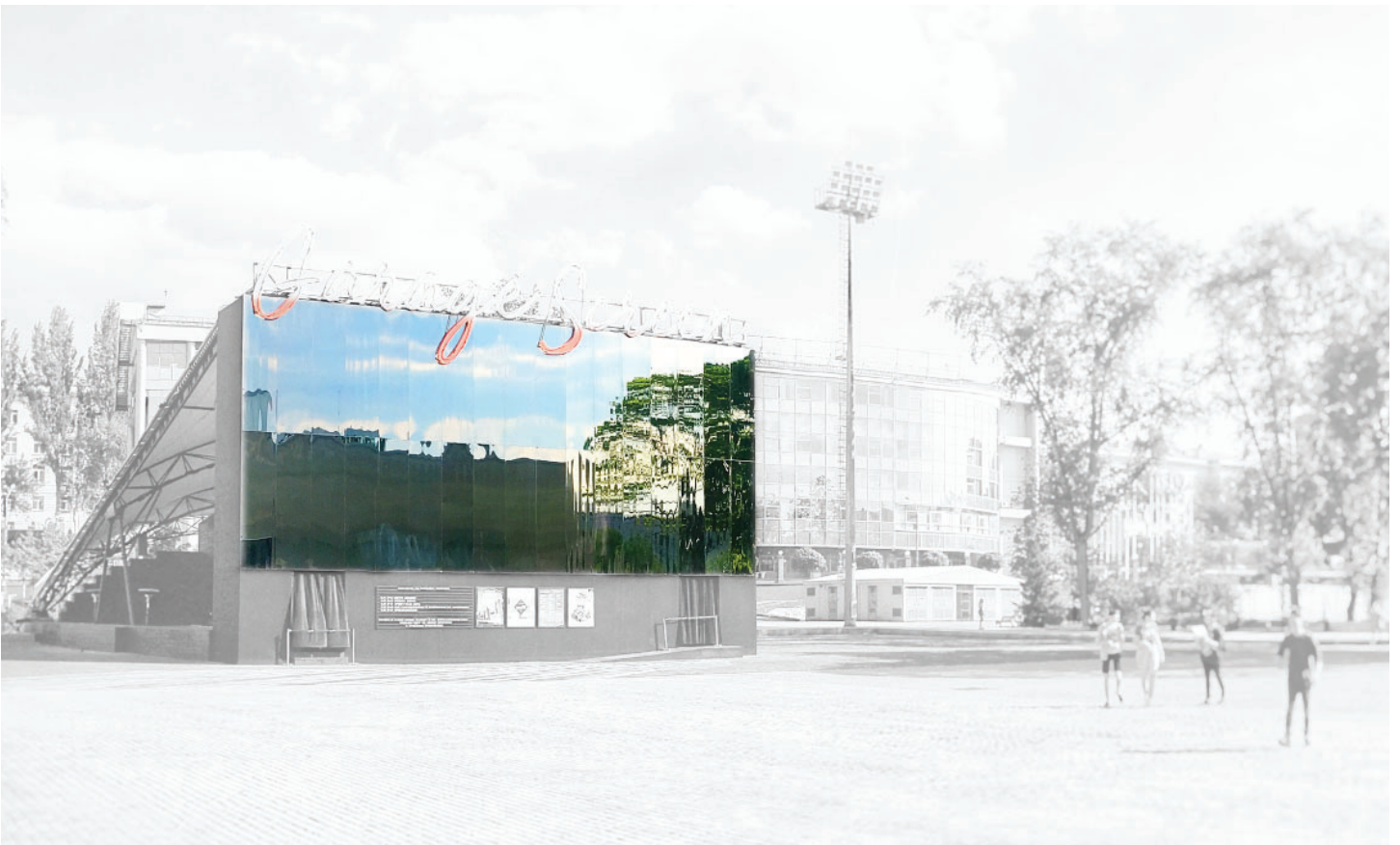






SUOMENLINNA ISLAND, HELSINKI, FINLAND

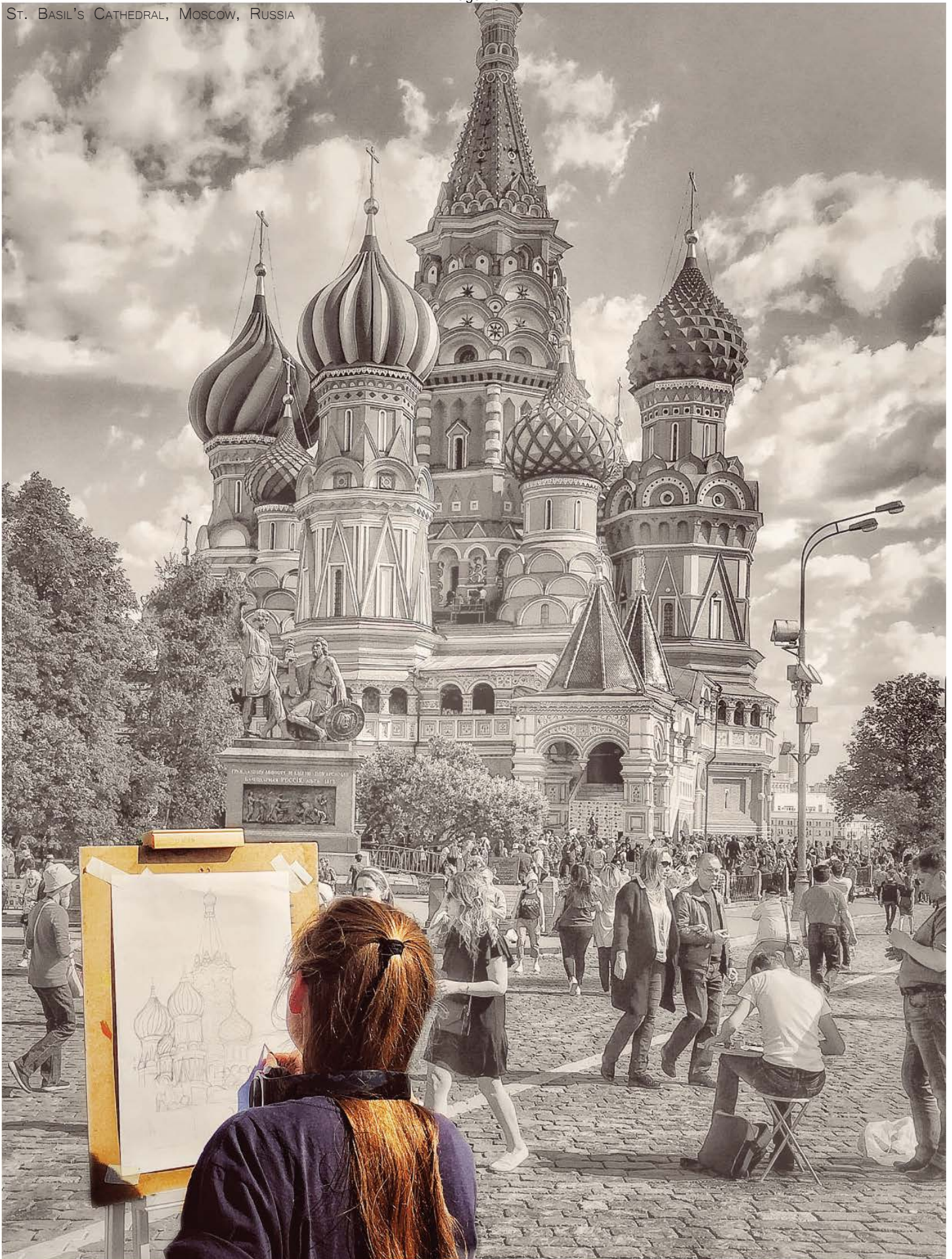
GARAGE MUSEUM, MOSCOW, RUSSIA





ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

ST. BASIL'S CATHEDRAL, MOSCOW, RUSSIA



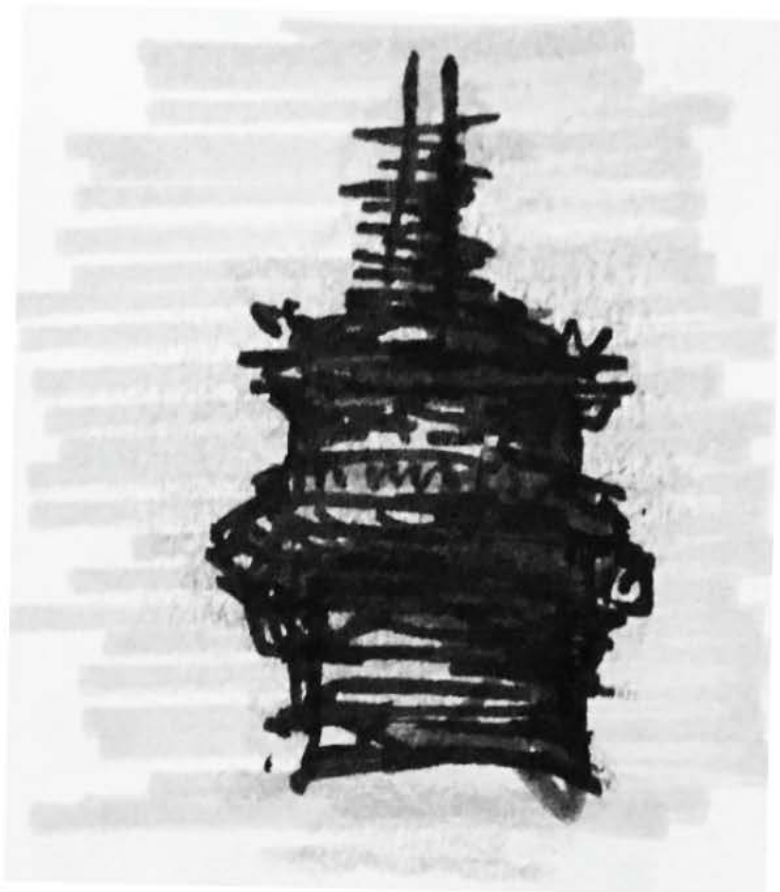
Many of the prior photos have been looking at aspects of lights, colors, and surfaces that stood out to me in contrast with their surroundings, but this image is based on an idea of mine; a perception of the place. The highlighted aspect of this image is that of the artist in the foreground who is drawing St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow, Russia. While walking through the Red Square on the day that the original photo of this image was taken, I passed many individuals and groups of people who were drawing or painting the cathedral, and that stood out to me. Rather than focus on the architecture in the picture (as I would tend to do as an architecture student), I focused upon the artist. The rest of the image is not desaturated just to draw attention to the artist, however, but I instead tried to make the rest of the image look like a high-quality drawing. The way in which the rest of the image was desaturated is different from how I did it with all of the previous images (this Note is actually the second oldest in the book, behind only the Helsinki Cathedral Note, which also used different techniques). The method used in this Note was specifically used because I wanted the end result to look like a drawing, because that is how I imagine the artist is viewing the world around her. It is about representing the cathedral as the subject of the Note may see it.

EMPHASIS VIA LAYERING

Emphasis via Layering is best used when you wish to compare the subject of the original image of the Digital Note, with another image that you find relevant to the original. As the name implies, this contrast is achieved through creating “layers” within the note, where each layer contains one of the images that you wish to compare. The images are arranged to be stacked atop of one another, with the top image becoming somewhat transparent so as to allow the image below to show through with the added context of the image above. For me, Layering provides an avenue for comparing my perceptions of a place with the reality. The majority of these Notes are comprised of photos of places that I visited on my travels through Europe in Summer 2018, with sketches I drew of those same places overlaid on top of them. The initial photos also tend to utilize the idea of Emphasis via Color to create greater contrast within the ending composition. This method allows easier identification of what it is that I focused upon in the creation of my Visual Notes. Additionally, there is a Digital Notes which utilized layers comprised of only my sketches of the subject, as well as a pair of Notes which use no sketches in their images.

THE EIFFEL TOWER, PARIS, FRANCE





The images upon the previous page provide an example of Layering which compares my sketches of a structure to more of my sketches of the same building. In the previous Note, I took the four sketches of the Eiffel Tower that I had drawn while I was in Paris, and compared them to each other. What differences were there in what I chose to represent and put detail and time and effort into? I felt that these discrepancies would be even further enhanced by the fact that I had to draw each sketch in a different style. How did my study of form compare with my study of structure? How did my study of details compare with my quick, rough sketch of the tower? Overlaying them allowed me to more directly compare them with each other, which gave me greater insight into how my own mind thinks as I am sketching.

The following Digital Notes which integrate my Visual Notes led me to think more about how I draw, and to think about the greater context surrounding my sketches, even if I do not show it within the drawing itself. The next three images all Layer my sketches on top of edited photos of the actual site, and they allow me to identify problems with perspective and proportionality that apparently affect my work. They allow room for greater growth and development of my skills, and for me to look at a picture greater than that which I tend to find myself sketching.



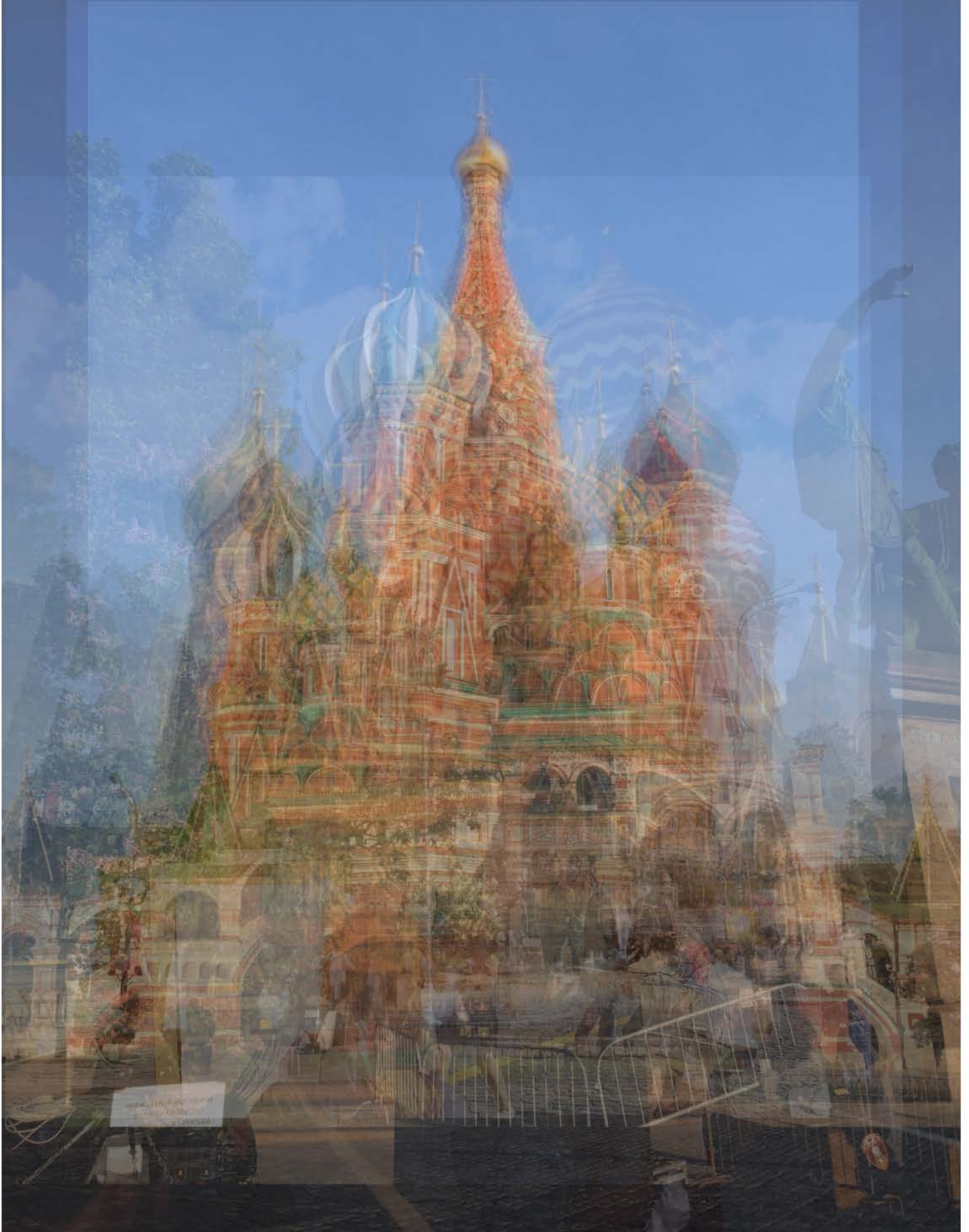


NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL, PARIS, FRANCE



THE COLOSSEUM, ROME, ITALY

ST. BASIL'S CATHEDRAL, MOSCOW, RUSSIA





THE COLOSSEUM, ROME, ITALY

The final two images of this section continue with the themes of perspective and layering, but in different ways to the previous Digital Notes which had all integrated my sketches of the subject. These images, rather, compare the subject of the image to photos of itself. On the left, St. Basil's Cathedral is depicted through an amalgamation of photos taken from a variety of different angles. The basis for this note was that, when viewing the cathedral in person, I had struggled to find a bad angle from which to take a photo. With the note, then, I combined all of those angles into one, definitive representation. The image above looks at the Colosseum in Rome, and emphasizes the layered façade of the existing building by exaggerating the effect of looking through its arches.

EMPHASIS VIA MANIPULATION

The final section of this book—Emphasis via Manipulation—is purposely broad in terms of what could be included within it, because it is intended to be more of a miscellaneous section. The following Digital Notes are ones that I created that do not fit in with the prior two sections, but are also unlike each other. What they do have in common is that they utilize a variety of different techniques and ideas to document the places that I visited. The only limits placed upon these images is that of my own skill and imagination; if the photo was edited in some way that doesn't quite fit in well with the ideas of Color and Layers, then it was placed here. Within the Notes documented through this section, I tried to come up with new ways of looking at the scenes depicted within the photos, and new ways of recording the thoughts and ideas that I had while I was in those places.

Almost all of the Notes shown up to this point (with the exception of those which incorporate sketches) have had the majority of the work put into their creation done after I had left the site depicted within their images. This is not the case with the image to the right. This image is a photo-collage in the style of David Hockney, created by arranging photos of a subject into a single, somewhat cohesive, whole. Much like the previous Note depicting various angles of St. Basil's Cathedral overlaid on top of each other, each of the photos used within a Hockney collage are taken from different angles and, often, under different conditions such as the time of day. The reason that I have separated this image of St. Vitus' Cathedral out from the rest of the Emphasis via Layering section is that there is a different thought process behind the creation of this image. The desired end result is not to compare, or to better showcase a vague idea as I tended to do in the last section, but rather it is to represent the building and its surroundings as one would see it while standing in a specific location. The photos that I took that make up this image were all taken while I was standing in a singular place, pivoting to see everything around me. This image showcases how perspective changes photos taken by a camera to the point where the final images, when compiled together, do not line up as one may think they should.



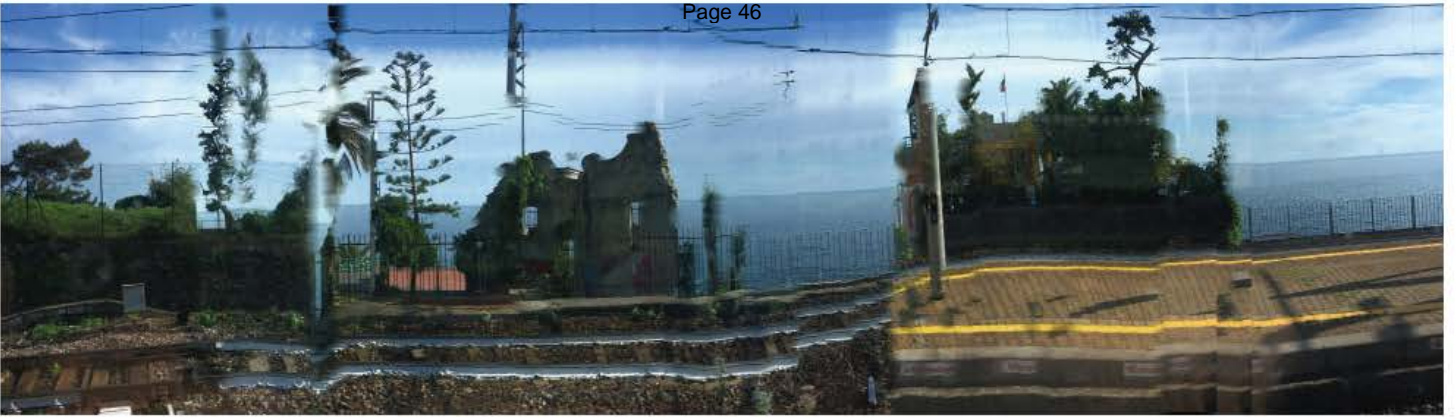
ST. VITUS' CATHEDRAL, PRAGUE, CZECHIA



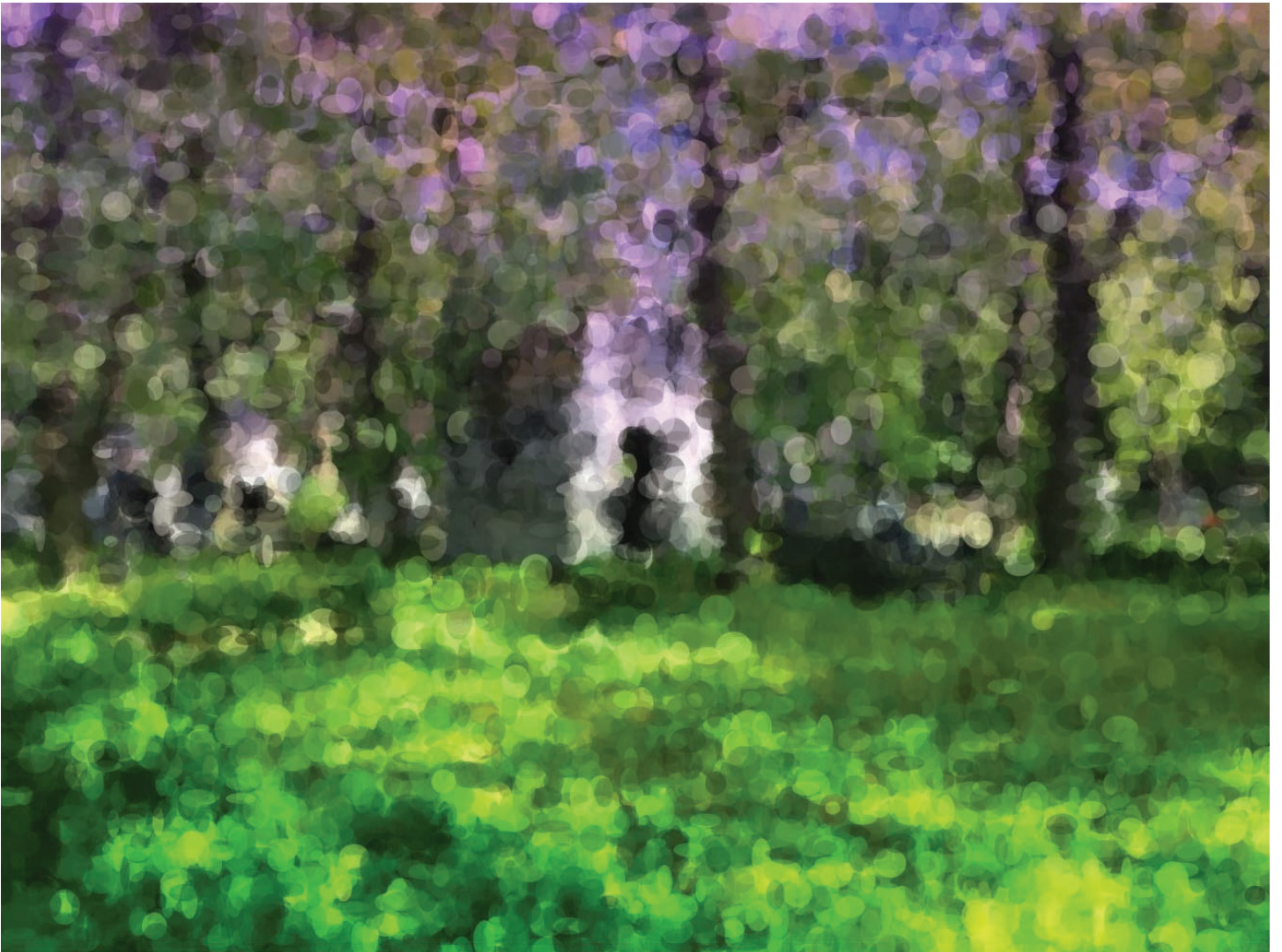








The proceeding collection of images are what I refer to as “Abridged Countrysides,” as they display a shortened representation of what you would see if you were to stare out the window of a train as you pass through the countries of Russia, Italy, and France. When traveling by train, what you tend to see are little snippets of the greater surrounding landscape, and not the whole picture. That is the idea that these images represent. They were created using the “panoramic camera” mode in the photo app of my phone, and placing the lens against the window of the train. Because that mode of the camera is not intended to be used in this way and at such high speeds, it glitches out, and only takes a few lines of image at a time. Buildings tend to turn out fairly well due to the continuity throughout the length of the structure, but trees and other irregular forms (especially those close to the train) do not as the camera is unable to interpolate between successive images as quickly as would be necessary. As a result, impressions of trees and other forms are given, while the greater persistent background tends to remain the same. These images show the variety present when looking out the window of the train, with a brevity of detail that, hopefully, leaves the viewer to wonder what many of the representations within the image actually are.



ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA



GLYMUR WATERFALL, ICELAND



RIOMAGGIORE, CINQUE TERRA, ITALY

This final set of images was made after the trip to Europe that inspired the rest of the Digital Notes within this book. Some of the included images were taken on a trip to Iceland in March of 2019, where I continued to think about the creation of Digital Notes. There are five images in this last set, and they were all generated with the ideals of the Impressionist art movement of the mid- to late-19th century in mind. Primarily among those ideas are the use of visible brush strokes to convey the changing nature of light and color found within the scenes they depict. The pictures I selected to apply this transformation to all, in my mind, exhibit characteristics which I felt would translate well into the Impressionist style. This decision was based upon their subject matter, and the presence of gradients of color and contrasting areas of light and shadow which could be found in various forms within each image.



GORKY PARK, MOSCOW, RUSSIA



SELTJARNARNES, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

REFLECTIONS:

It is my belief that working on these Digital Notes had an extremely positive effect upon the trip that I took across Europe during Summer 2018, and that the things that I learned while working on them will continue to have an influence upon my future travels. I believe this effect is primarily due to the key differences between the creation of traditional Visual Notes such as sketches, and the thought processes that lead to the creation of these Digital Notes. The primary difference between the two isn't just the medium within which they are created and presented, but rather it is the subject matter that they portray. I find that, when looking for something that I want to sketch, I am primarily looking at my surroundings as a collection of objects to be drawn. As an architecture student, I primarily focus upon the buildings around me and the concrete, physical details that make them up, which I can then choose to represent in a drawing. I look at aspects of the buildings and their surroundings until I find some point that I find interesting enough to sketch, and then I hone in on that piece and, often, cease to continue examining the surrounding environment.

It is my belief that this approach led to sketches that were rigid and bland and much too focused upon the details. The drawings that I produced towards the end of the trip, however, were the opposite—they were looser and less defined and much less dependent upon the minutiae and the perfection that had caused my earlier sketches to feel so dry. Those later sketches have a character to them that I believe comes from the greater understanding of place that came through my investigation into Digital Notes.

In my experience, Digital Notes—as opposed to Visual Notes—encourage a higher level of abstract thinking and interpretation. In doing a conventional drawing of a place, my goal has typically been to represent the physical characteristics of the object in question in a way that someone viewing the sketches could immediately identify or recognize the subject. Digital Notes as I use them, however, do not tend to share that goal. Almost all of the Digital Notes that I have done are based off of photographs of the place that I took while in the setting, and I don't believe a drawing could ever be more accurate than a photograph. Because the Digital Notes are not primarily focused upon the creation of an accurate image, then, they are allowed greater freedom in terms of what they can represent. Instead of the concrete, physical details, the images are allowed to focus upon things that cannot be easily represented within a drawing; they can be based upon thoughts and observations that don't translate well into drawn media.

A good example of this is one of the Digital Notes I created of St. Basil's Cathedral located within the Red Square in Moscow, Russia. The Note I am referring to is the one within which I overlaid multiple photos of St. Basil's on top of one another to the point where the true form of the building is lost. As I explain in the description for that Note, the basic idea behind its creation was that I did not think that there was a bad angle from which to view the cathedral. It seemed to me to be a very photogenic building, no matter if I was looking at it from the front or the back or any of its other possible sides. That idea—that there were no bad angles to the structure—led me to start thinking

about what would happen if I exposed pictures from every angle of the building over top of each other. What would it look like? Would the building still be recognizable? Would this idea actually make the structure look bad, or would its photogenic nature continue to shine through what could easily be a muddled mess of an image? Trying to illustrate an idea such as this through traditional Visual Notes could only be done (in my mind) through the use of more sketches and drawings—there would be no way to incorporate them all into a single image and still have that image be readable.

Exploring new cities with the creation of Digital Notes in the back of my mind led me to notice things around me that I may not have if it wasn't for the Notes. Even if I did notice the little details, their specifics and my impressions of them would have been forgotten in the following months. The Notes helped me to actively think about the places I visited, and made those thoughts stick. I am able to remember and appreciate so much more of the trip and of my first impressions of the places I visited because of my experience developing the notes. For all of the Notes that I completed during the trip and in the year since, there are still far more that I had thought about and considered creating, but never got around to. In my sketchbook is a page where I listed every Digital Note idea that I had while I was on the trip. The ones that I created I crossed off, but those only make up less than half of the total list. I was constantly thinking about different Notes and coming up with new ideas. I would see some random object or moment while wandering the cities that we visited, and I would imagine a Note incorporating that scene within my mind. Even now, a year later, I can look through that list and remember what each item on the list means, and how I imagined that Digital Note turning out. I can remember what stood out to me in each scene, and what my thoughts about it were. Even though those notes were never created, the thought process behind Digital Notes allowed me to more critically examine my surroundings for interesting moments that go beyond what I notice when creating Visual Notes.

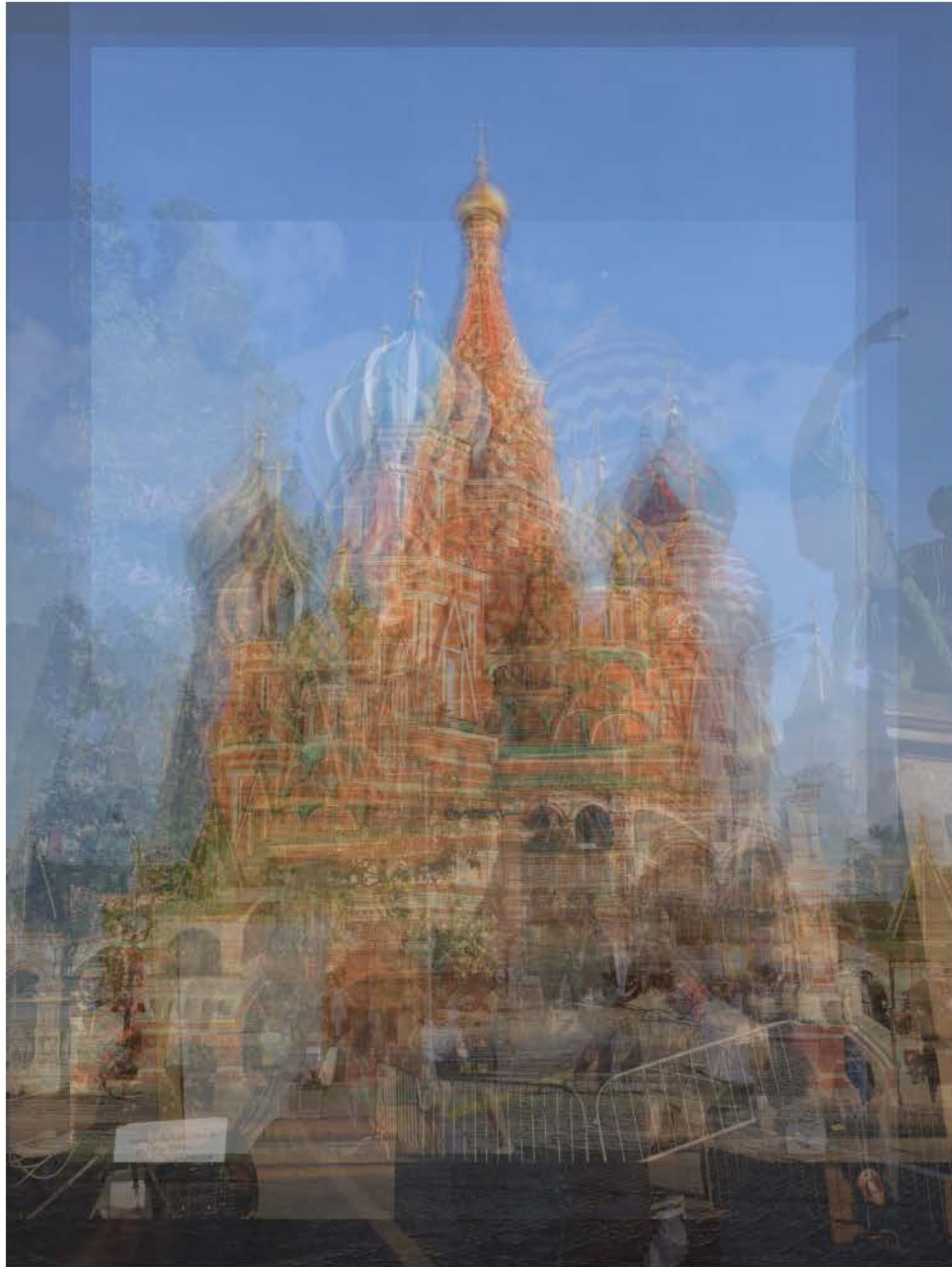
For all of this, though, I will again mention that I do not believe that Digital Notes should replace Visual Notes; rather, I believe that they should be used in tandem. To me, Visual Notes are very good for examining the details and forms of specific buildings and places in ways that Digital Notes cannot. When I'm drawing, I have to take the time to examine the structure I'm attempting to represent so that my sketch of it can be as accurate as possible. On the downside, I often feel as though the time commitment that comes with creating Visual Notes detracts from the time that I could otherwise spend exploring, and finding new areas of interest within the area. Looking at one specific scene for too long causes me to feel like I am missing out on moments happening elsewhere, and that I am losing time that could otherwise have been devoted to exploring more of the city around me. With Digital Notes, on the other hand, this wasn't an issue for me. I could look around me and identify some scene that I wanted to create a note about, and then I would take a picture and write the idea down in my sketchbook. The Note itself was typically created later while I was in the hotel room or on a plane or train between cities. This gave me a greater sense of freedom, I felt, as I did not feel constricted by the time it would take to create the images I wanted to create; I could create the Digital Notes whenever I had the time.

Both Digital and Visual Notes have pros and have cons, and for that reason I believe that a balance between the two is the best solution, especially considering they can be used to influence

each other. Several of my Digital Notes utilized overlaying to contrast the differences between my sketches and the actual scene that they were based upon. Likewise, as I alluded to at the start of this reflection, my pursuit of Digital Notes changed how I sketched. I feel dissatisfied looking back at many of my early sketches from the trip, but I am extremely proud of many of my later ones. I stopped focusing on trying to create picture-perfect representations of what I was viewing, and instead started examining the character of the scene more. For instance, instead of looking at the intricate stone- and metalwork present within a structure, I looked at the effect it had upon the perception of the building in terms of outlines/edges and shadows that they cast. And most importantly, in my mind, I scaled down my expectation for what I was drawing and for how much time I was willing to devote to Visual Note. While the greater time commitment Visual Notes require can be helpful in terms of giving more time to study the scene, it often leads me to try and take on too much. I found that an imposed a time limit forced me to scale back my aspirations for the drawing, and to focus only upon the most important details that stood out to me—much as Digital Notes do. Some of my favorite sketches from the trip were done under some time constraint or another because the pressure of getting the drawing done within that timeframe led to them being more focused than my earlier sketches were.

For all of these reasons, I plan on continuing to utilize Digital Notes through my future travels (and indeed, I have, as evidenced by the notes created from pictures taken while I was in Iceland in March 2019). To me, they open up new avenues of thought and exploration while traveling, and allow for more unique memories of the places which I have visited. I am more clearly able to remember my thoughts and first impressions of the structures and scenes depicted in my Notes upon viewing them. I find they allow for critical thinking and analysis of my surroundings in ways that I feel were not as readily obvious when I was only intending to create Visual Notes. Even if I never create the Digital Notes that I envision while exploring in the future, it is the ideas and thoughts that go into the notes that I find most appealing about them. They provide a unique and interesting way of representing ideas and places, but it is just as important to me to have that critical thinking exercise that comes in the pursuit of a new Note.

I have compiled these Notes because I feel that seeing them, and understanding the processes and thoughts behind their creation will help others to begin to see and think about the world around them in new and exciting ways while they travel. Even if they never create any Digital Notes of their own, I believe that they will benefit from knowing of their existence, and understanding the thought processes that go into them. The intent is not to convince people to create their own Notes, but to show them new ways of thinking and viewing the world around them, so that they are able to view their surroundings with a new perspective, and to notice things would otherwise miss. It is this new perspective that I gained after I began creating and thinking about Digital Notes, and it is that same new line of thinking that I wish to pass on to everyone I can.

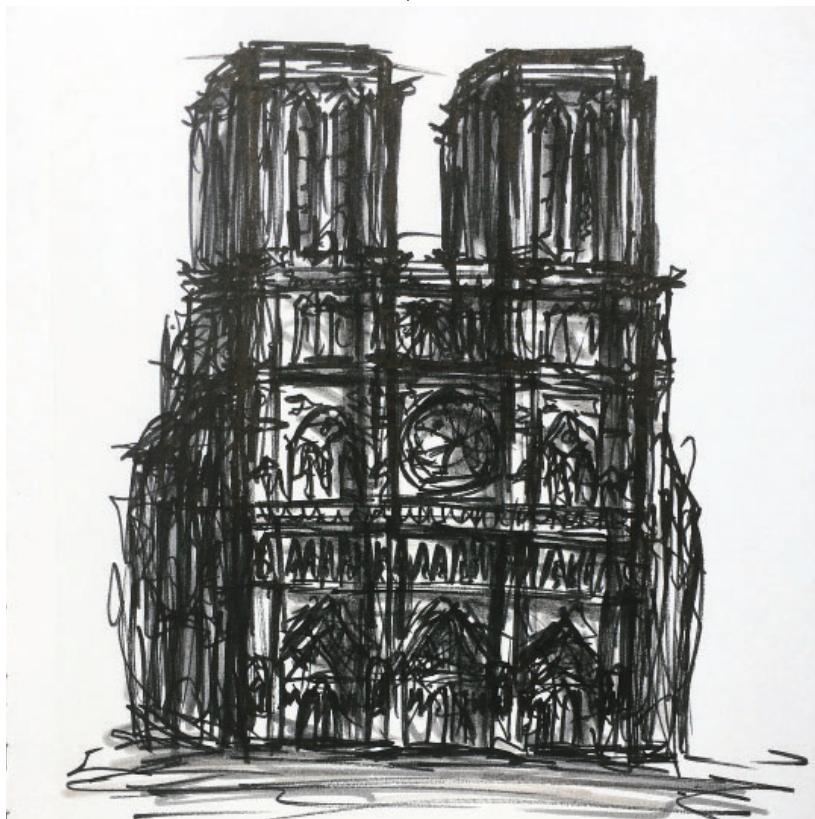


DIGITAL NOTE EXPLORING THE IDEA THAT ST. BASIL'S CATHEDRAL IN MOSCOW HAS NO BAD ANGLES.



FIRST SKETCH - HELSINKI, FINLAND - 5.9.2018

FINAL SKETCH - PARIS, FRANCE - 6.4.2018



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Hockney, David. *Pearblossom Hwy, #2*. 1986. Chromogenic prints mounted on paper honeycomb panel. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Laseau, Paul. *Freehand Sketching: An Introduction*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004. Print.

Leymarie, Jean. *Impressionism: Biographical and Critical Study*. Switzerland: Skira, 1955. Print.

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Rubin, James H. *Impressionism*. London: Phaidon, 1999. Print.